

types of security decisions. I believe that we should allow our local communities and those who know them best the flexibility to pursue the solutions that will decrease violence, drug use, and other crimes that plague much of the public housing in our nation today. I do not believe that Americans who need assistance with housing costs should be forced to live in fear.

That is why I am reintroducing the HUD Housing Security and Flexibility Act. This legislation would allow HUD to hire local law enforcement agencies for these purposes. It authorizes offices that receive or administer funds under either of the aforementioned programs to enter into contracts with police departments and other agencies. These contracts would be limited to three years in length, and would be solely for security, patrols, or other protective services at HUD-owned or -assisted housing.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that this legislation will go a long way towards eliminating crime in our public housing, and making Americans feel safer in their homes. I hope that the Congress will take up this important legislation during the 108th Congress.

#### PROTECT OUR FLAG

### HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 7, 2003*

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a constitutional amendment for the protection of our nation's flag. The flag is a revered symbol of America's great tradition of liberty and democratic government, and it ought to be protected from acts of desecration that diminish us all.

As you know, there have been several attempts to outlaw by statute the desecration of the flag. Both Congress and state legislatures have passed such measures in recent years, only to be overruled later by decisions of the Supreme Court. It is clear that nothing short of an amendment to the Constitution will ensure that Old Glory has the complete and unqualified protection of the law.

The most common objection to this kind of amendment is that it unduly infringes on the freedom of speech. However, this objection disregards the fact that our freedoms are not practiced beyond the bounds of common sense and reason. As is often the case, there are reasonable exceptions to the freedom of speech, such as libel, obscenity, trademarks, and the like. Desecration of the flag is this kind of act, something that goes well beyond the legitimate exercising of a right. It is a wholly disgraceful and unacceptable form of behavior, an affront to the proud heritage and tradition of America.

Make no mistake, this constitutional amendment should be at the very top of the agenda of this Congress. We owe it to every citizen of this country, and particularly to those brave men and women who have stood in harm's way so that the flag and what it stands for might endure. I urge this body to take a strong stand for what is right and ensure the protection of our flag.

HONORING THE CONCLUSION OF  
ALAMEDA BOARD OF EDUCATION  
TRUSTEE BERRSFORD BINGHAM'S  
TENURE ON THE SCHOOL BOARD

### HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 7, 2003*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Berresford "Berry" Bingham on the completion of his second term as trustee of the Alameda Board of Education.

An eight-year veteran on the school board, Berry has served the maximum number of terms allowed under district term limits. In 1998 he served as Board President, and he was chair of the District Base Reuse Committee, which monitored the impact on Alameda Schools of the closure of the Alameda Naval Air Station.

The First African-American elected to the Alameda Board of Education, Berry has served as president-elect of the California School Board Association (CSBA) Black Caucus and as a member of CSBA's statewide Parent Task Force. He is also the first Alameda School Board Member to serve in the CSBA Delegate Assembly, where he served four years.

A long time advocate for quality education, Berry has served as Board Representative in negotiating joint agreements with the City of Alameda regarding increased developers' fees, as a Board Member of the Alameda Education Foundation, and as Board Representative to the Oakland-Alameda Regional Occupational Program Advisory Board. Also, he has served as a member of the Urban School Board Council in Sacramento.

Berry is a passionate advocate for innovative educational programs, and he has pushed for district accountability in improving student performance. He holds the district to high academic standards for all students, and he is a tireless supporter of the role of early-childhood education in laying the foundation for academic success.

A deeply caring, "hands-on" board member, Berry has made himself accessible to the community at any time of the day or night. When Alameda's Woodstock Child Development Center was at risk of closing due to a large budget deficit, Berry contributed his monthly Board stipend to help offset expenses.

The father of three Alameda public school graduates, Berry is past PTA president of Woodstock Elementary School and Chipman Middle School.

A courageous school board member, Berry never wavered in making decisions that put students first. I am honored to commend Berresford "Berry" Bingham for his years of dedicated service to the Alameda Board of Education.

#### IDENTITY THEFT PREVENTION ACT

### HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 7, 2003*

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the Identity Theft Prevention Act. This act pro-

tections the American people from government-mandated uniform identifiers that facilitate private crime as well as the abuse of liberty. The major provision of the Identity Theft Prevention Act halts the practice of using the Social Security number as an identifier by requiring the Social Security Administration to issue all Americans new Social Security numbers within five years after the enactment of the bill. These new numbers will be the sole legal property of the recipient and the Social Security administration shall be forbidden to divulge the numbers for any purposes not related to Social Security administration. Social Security numbers issued before implementation of this bill shall no longer be considered valid federal identifiers. Of course, the Social Security Administration shall be able to use an individual's original Social Security number to ensure efficient administration of the Social Security system.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has a moral responsibility to address this problem because it was Congress which transformed the Social Security number into a national identifier. Thanks to Congress, today no American can get a job, open a bank account, get a professional license, or even get a driver's license without presenting their Social Security number. So widespread has the use of the Social Security number become that a member of my staff had to produce a Social Security number in order to get a fishing license!

One of the most disturbing abuses of the Social Security number is the congressionally-authorized rule forcing parents to get a Social Security number for their newborn children in order to claim them as dependents. Forcing parents to register their children with the state is more like something out of the nightmares of George Orwell than the dreams of a free republic which inspired this nation's founders.

Congressionally-mandated use of the Social Security number as an identifier facilitates the horrendous crime of identity theft. Thanks to Congress, an unscrupulous person may simply obtain someone's Social Security number in order to access that person's bank accounts, credit cards, and other financial assets. Many Americans have lost their life savings and had their credit destroyed as a result of identity theft—yet the federal government continues to encourage such crimes by mandating use of the Social Security number as a uniform ID!

This act also forbids the federal government from creating national ID cards or establishing any identifiers for the purpose of investigating, monitoring, overseeing, or regulating private transactions between American citizens, as well as repealing those sections of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 that require the Department of Health and Human Services to establish a uniform standard health identifier. By putting an end to government-mandated uniform IDs, the Identity Theft Prevention Act will prevent millions of Americans from having their liberty, property and privacy violated by private-and-public sector criminals.

In addition to forbidding the federal government from creating national identifiers, this legislation forbids the federal government from blackmailing states into adopting uniform standard identifiers by withholding federal funds. One of the most onerous practices of Congress is the use of federal funds illegitimately taken from the American people to bribe states into obeying federal dictates.